

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 16, 2003

**TAIWANESE COMPANY AND SHIP ENGINEER
PLEAD GUILTY IN TACOMA TO CRIMINAL CHARGES
RELATING TO DUMPING OF WASTE OIL INTO OCEAN**

John McKay, United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington, Richard Gardner, Special Agent in Charge of the Coast Guard Investigative Service, and Donald Sims, Special Agent in Charge of the Portland Area Office, Criminal Investigation Division of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, announced that on April 15, 2003, United States District Court Judge Jack E. Tanner accepted the plea of TA TONG MARINE CO., LTD., a Taiwanese operator of a fleet of ocean going cargo ships, to two criminal charges relating to the falsification of records concealing the intentional dumping of waste oil into the ocean. On March 10, 2003, WANG KI, the chief engineer of the marine vessel ("M/V") GRAND GLORY, a TA TONG MARINE cargo ship, also pled guilty to a felony false statement relating to the same dumping activity.

According to the plea agreements and other court records:

Chief Engineer WANG KI directed the engine crew of the M/V GRAND GLORY to discharge over twenty (20) tons of oily waste, including sludge and bilge water, through a bypass hose directly overboard into the ocean. The engine crew also falsified a log book, which was supposed to document the ship's handling of oil, partly to prevent agencies like the United States Coast Guard from discovering that the ship had illegally discharged waste into the ocean.

The false log book came to the attention of inspectors who boarded the M/V GRAND GLORY on February 3 and 4, 2003, while the cargo ship was docked at the Port of Vancouver, Washington. After discovering discrepancies in the log book, investigators learned that the ship's engine crew used a hose to bypass required pollution control equipment, discharging oily waste generated by the ship directly into the ocean. The investigation further disclosed that the engine crew had falsified the log book to conceal the earlier, illegal discharges into the ocean.

TA TONG MARINE pled guilty to a felony violation for making false statements to the United States Coast Guard and failing to maintain proper records associated with the ship's handling of its waste oil. If approved by the Court, TA TONG MARINE will pay a fine of \$750,000, develop and implement a comprehensive environmental compliance plan, and serve four years on probation. TA TONG MARINE is scheduled to be sentenced in Federal District Court in Tacoma on July 11, 2003.

WANG KI also pled guilty to a felony violation for making false statements to the United States Coast Guard, and agreed to cooperate with the government in its investigation of TA TONG MARINE. WANG KI is scheduled to be sentenced in Federal District Court in Tacoma on June 13, 2003, and he faces a maximum statutory penalty of five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

These guilty pleas come less than three weeks after two other foreign shipping corporations and a ship engineer were sentenced in Tacoma by U.S. District Judge

Ronald B. Leighton for similar criminal behavior. In that case, UNIX LINE PTE. LTD., a Singapore corporation, and SPRINGS NAVIGATION S.A., a Panama corporation, agreed to pay a collective fine of \$750,000, implement an environmental compliance plan for their fleet of vessels, and serve four years on probation. Judge Leighton directed that \$300,000 of the fine be allocated to several projects intended to preserve and enhance the marine environment near Tacoma, Washington.

According to United States Attorney John McKay, the prosecutions of these three companies and two chief engineers over the past five months is part of a new focus by his office into the serious pollution problems associated with the intentional dumping of waste materials into the ocean and waterways. Both matters were investigated by the Coast Guard Criminal Investigative Service and the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division, with assistance from the Washington State Department of Ecology, Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response Program. The cases were prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Mark Chutkow and Special Assistant United States Attorney James Oesterle, Regional Criminal Enforcement Counsel with EPA.

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